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UNCLAS KATHMANDU 000906

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE

STATE FOR SA/INS  
LONDON FOR POL - RIEDEL  
NSC FOR HARRY THOMAS

E.O. 12958: N/A  
TAGS: PTER MCAP PGOV NP  
SUBJECT: MAOISTS ATTACK OUTPOSTS IN ROLPA AND SANKHUVASABHA

REF: A. (A) KATHMANDU 787

1B. (B) KATHMANDU 872  
1C. (C) KATHMANDU 882

11. (SBU) Summary: On the night of May 7 Maoist insurgents attacked a combined Royal Nepal Army (RNA) and police outpost in Gam, Rolpa in western Nepal. The attack in Rolpa follows the RNA's routing of a Maoist camp at another location in the same district (Refs B and C). The RNA has lost contact with the soldiers under attack in Gam, and helicopters sent to the site have been unable to land. In addition, at least four APF and 14 Maoists were killed in an attack on an Armed Police Force (APF) base camp in Sankhuwasabha in the northeast. End summary.

12. (SBU) At about 11:00 p.m. on May 7 Maoist insurgents attacked a combined company of security forces: one platoon of about 70 Royal Nepal Army (RNA) soldiers and two platoons of mixed regular and Armed Police Force (APF) police, commanded by an RNA major, in a temporary deployment position in Gam, Rolpa. (Note: Gam is about 30 KM northeast of Lisne Lek, where the RNA had engaged Maoists at a training camp May 1-5. End note.) At the time of the attack, 40 of the RNA soldiers at the camp, along with 20 policemen, were deployed out in blocking positions to cut off Maoists escaping from the RNA attack on the training camp at Lisne Lek (Refs B and C), leaving the RNA platoon at less than half its normal strength. The division subsequently lost radio communications with the outpost. As of mid-day May 8, bad weather and smoke had obstructed attempts to fly helicopters to the site.

13. (SBU) Because of the communications black-out, the RNA is unable to confirm the number of casualties. In general, however, RNA sources contacted were not optimistic. There have also been unconfirmed reports of smoke coming from the village of Gam, raising some fears that the Maoists may have exacted revenge on villagers.

14. (SBU) Just before midnight April 8 Maoists also attacked an Armed Police Force (APF) base camp at Chainpur, Sankhuwasabha in northeastern Nepal. Fighting continued until 3:00 a.m. Casualties reported thus far amount to 4 APF and 14 Maoists killed.

15. (SBU) Comment: Gam, which Embassy DATT visited May 1, is one of several towns "liberated" by the RNA from Maoist control and subsequently garrisoned by combined RNA/police/APF (Ref A). In the heart of Maoist territory--where Maoists launched their first attack on police six years ago--these garrison towns are a direct challenge to the insurgents right in their own neighborhood. The RNA has thus been expecting attacks on the towns for some time; the insurgents surprised at the Lisne Lek camp (Refs A and B) were believed to have been massing for just such an attack. It seems unlikely that the attack on Gam could have been staged from Lisne Lek, although the Army admits a number of insurgents were able to escape from the area with their weapons. The attack on Gam raises the possibility of other staging/training camps in the area besides the one discovered by the RNA.

MALINOWSKI